

ABSTRACT

A computer network has two or more switches and a plurality of links. A first machine and a second machine are interconnected by the network in such a way that there exist multiple paths through the network from an N_Port of the first machine to an N_Port of the second machine. Network traffic from the N_Port of the first machine to the N_Port of the second machine is distributed between the multiple paths such that frames related to any single exchange traverse the same path yet frames of a first exchange need not traverse the same path as frames of a second exchange. Frames of each exchange therefore tend to be received by their destination in order with respect to other frames of that exchange, while they are not necessarily received in-order with respect to frames of other exchanges.